

FSH FUNERAL GUIDELINES

15 September 2006

1. Areas of responsibility:

a. Weekly funeral roster

Monday:	Garrison Chaplain
Tuesday:	Deputy Installation Chaplain
Wednesday:	Family Life Chaplain
Thursday:	AMEDDC&C Chaplains
Friday:	Tenant Chaplains

b. Chaplains assigned to the Army Medical Department Center & School, other Tenants, and Garrison Fort Sam Houston, will respond to funeral requests for: Active Duty and retired Army, Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personnel and their dependents, members of the chapel congregations, 100 percent disabled veterans of the Armed Services, and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. Because of the proximity of Air Force bases in the San Antonio area, Air Force chaplains at Air Force Base chapels will support Active Duty and retired Air Force members. Exceptions may be made by the Installation Chaplain.

c. Weekend funerals must be approved by the Installation or Garrison Chaplain.

2. Requests for Chaplain.

a. Point of contact for funeral arrangements is the Funeral Coordinator, Ms Iva Winslow (210.221.2754), during duty hours, and the duty chaplain, (210.391.7243) during non-duty hours. Instructions for the duty chaplain will be maintained in the duty log.

b. Chaplain-specific presiders will be coordinated with the Funeral Coordinator. When no specific chaplain is requested, the chaplain assigned funeral coverage for the day of the funeral will be responsible. If more than one funeral is scheduled for a given time, the duty chaplain will be the backup.

c. Requests for chaplain coverage of a funeral will be accepted only from the responsible funeral home, the mortuary affairs office, or Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. When a memorial service is requested, or the remains have been cremated (with no funeral home involved), requests may be made from individuals.

d. All data will be registered on a funeral worksheet, maintained by the Funeral Coordinator. A copy of the funeral worksheet will be provided to the assigned chaplain and the facility, when appropriate.

3. Requests for Catholic Chaplain.

All requests for a Catholic Chaplain are coordinated with the Chaplain before they are accepted.

4. Requests for Jewish Chaplain.

a. Members of local congregations will be serviced by their local Rabbi, or call the FSH Jewish Lay Leader, Norton Shectman (210.379.8666). He will assist in obtaining a Rabbi. The Lay Leader should receive a courtesy call regarding Jewish funerals.

b. The Funeral Coordinator is responsible for monitoring this process and assuring proper funeral coverage.

c. Traditional Jewish funerals must occur within 24 hours of the death, except on Saturday. Weekend burials require approval from the Central Veterans Affairs office in Washington DC.

5. Requests for Muslim Chaplain. There is no Active Duty Muslim Chaplain at Fort Sam Houston. Contact the Muslim Lay Leader thru the Funeral Coordinator.

6. Funeral Roster

a. The roster will be maintained by the Funeral Coordinator and will include all AMEDDC&S and Garrison Chaplains (does not include the Installation and Catholic Chaplains).

b. The roster will run for regular duty days. The duty chaplain will cover all weekend funerals, holiday funerals, and/or training holiday funerals unless other arrangements (e.g., family has coordinated for another chaplain). When a Catholic Chaplain is on-call Duty Chaplain (for Friday funeral duty), and a Protestant Chaplain is requested for that Friday, the previous Protestant on-call Duty Chaplain will be contacted for the service.

7. Requests for Chapel.

a. Requests for funerals must specify the religion requested (i.e., Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or Muslim). Normally, the religion of the deceased is the faith group determining the funeral. For example, if a Protestant service member is married to a Roman Catholic, and the Protestant dies. The funeral should thus be Protestant. No requests for "generic" funerals or "any chaplain will do" will be honored. All requests for coverage, which cannot be met, will be referred to the National Cemetery, 210.820.3891.

b. The Funeral Coordinator will coordinate requests for use of a chapel, if possible, at the time of the request. Dodd Field Chapel and Main Post Chapel are the preferred worship centers for funeral/memorial services. Soldiers who die on active duty and high ranking retirees (e.g., general officers) are high profile events which will be scheduled in the Main Post Chapel unless the family requests a different chapel. The Funeral Coordinator will identify any conflicts in scheduling with the chapel. Morning chapel funerals will be between the hours of 0900 and 1100. Afternoon funerals will be between the hours of 1330 and 1600. The scheduling funeral home should identify time of arrival of remains at the chapel. (When possible, funeral home should be allowed 1 hour for set up.)

c. When the chapel is scheduled, inquire if music is requested. Only the contract chapel organists will play the chapel organs unless the Chapel OIC makes an exception. The telephone number of the contract organist for the scheduled chapel may be given to the funeral home. The funeral home will make the arrangement with the musician. A piano is also available. The funeral home or the family may provide a competent pianist.

8. Chaplain Responsibility.

a. Chaplains designated for funeral duty must remain available to perform assigned funerals. Funeral requests take priority over any other responsibility on that day. Any change must be coordinated with the Funeral Coordinator, and the substitute chaplain's name provided before any changes are effective.

b. The chaplain assigned funeral duty is responsible for the order of service and conducting the funeral.

c. Chaplains will contact the funeral home providing the services and the responsible funeral director as soon as possible. Chaplains are encouraged to contact the next of kin, if available, for coordination of services and pastoral care. To avoid confusion, chaplains should inquire if other clergy member(s) will be participating in the service.

d. In the event of a caisson funeral at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, the Chaplain (and civilian clergy if participating in the funeral) may march 25 paces in front of the caisson. If marching, the uniform will be Dress Blue, four-in-hand tie, and cap. The chaplain should coordinate with the Honors Platoon if marching.

e. Due to the large volume of funerals at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Honors (volleys, taps, flag presentation) normally occur first at the gravesite, followed by religious rites (the Good Lord gets in the last word).

f. Chaplain uniform for funeral and graveside services will be as follows:

(1) Funerals for all Active Duty soldiers, retired general officer, and Medal of Honor Recipients: Dress Blues, four-in-hand tie, with cap. Other “high profile” funerals may be Dress Blue funerals if the command dictates.

(2) All other funerals: Class A.

(3) Specified uniform available thru the Honors Platoon, 210.842.2464